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Yes, you can teach an old dog new tricks. Contextualisation, Embedding and Mapping: the CEM Model, a new way to define and engage staff and students in the delivery of an English language and study skills support programme: a case study of Heriot-Watt and Northumbria University.

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Yes, you can teach an old dog new tricks. Contextualisation, Embedding and Mapping: the CEM Model, a new way to define and engage staff and students in the delivery of an English language and study skills support programme: a comparison of Heriot-Watt and Northumbria University.

This paper presents a pedagogical solution to challenges in delivering English language and study skills support to the diverse range of students now entering Higher Education. It presents a new definition of study skills, responding to the call within the literature to move away from the bolt on approach associated with the deficit model of student support. A rationale is presented, together with research underpinning the design and development of a model of study skills delivery built on the three areas of contextualisation, embedding and mapping, resulting in the CEM Model. Discussion will show how the model informs delivery of study skills at two universities, identifying key issues from the three perspectives of the student, academic subject specialist and English language specialist. Analysis of the impact of using the CEM Model on classroom pedagogy informs the current debate on the delivery of study skills. Finally the discussion will show how the model has helped to communicate and inform the design of study skills support classes and more importantly impacts on the role of study skills as part of the delivery of academic programmes.

Keywords: study skills support, CEM Model, student support, English language;

Introduction

This paper presents a pedagogical solution to the challenges facing UK Higher Education (HE) institutions providing English language and study skills support programmes to international students. The British Council's research, *Student Decision Making Survey*, canvassing 115,000 students from 200 countries, identified that students studying in the UK did so on the basis of quality of education, representing the highest rating of any country on this criterion (Morgan, 2010). These statistics have produced a discourse as identified by Luxon & Peelo (2010) questioning how we continue the practice that initially attracted the students; recognise the diversity presented and its affect on teaching; and while acknowledging the impact of current government spending cuts, embrace the fiscal benefits international recruitment now represents. The following contributes to the debate around recognising the diversity international students present and the challenges created for learning and teaching practice and policy, responding to the call that;

By concentrating too much on systemic changes one detaches the issue of internationalisation from the everyday experience of the learning environment. ...Rather than implementation being merely a response to an abstract policy at the macro, institutional level, our view is that an implementation strategy at the micro, teaching and learning level must be there from the beginning. Luxon & Peelo (2010, p 53-54)

How to achieve this underpins the paper, outlining existing research addressing the learning and teaching challenge of delivering study skills support programmes to international students. The methodology, research and solution (Sloan & Porter, 2009, 2010) was developed into a pedagogical approach incorporating the three elements of contextualisation, embedding and mapping, referred to as the CEM Model (Sloan & Porter, 2009, 2010).

This paper shows how the CEM Model supports university practice at a micro level, informing the design of strategic learning and teaching policy at a macro level. It also demonstrates the transferability and sustainability of the CEM Model by documenting its trial and adoption within the HE community informing practice, and enhancing the quality of the students' learning experience. It will outline the debate within the literature on study skills delivery, identification of the CEM Model at Newcastle Business School, and delivery across Northumbria University, discussion of the trialling of the model at Heriot-Watt, concluding with how this has informed the model's ongoing development and refinement.

The study skills definition and delivery debate

A new definition of study skills

Traditionally study skills are viewed as the delivery of remedial extra-curricular activities by service teachers usually from outside the students' departments Cottrell (2001). This is the 'old dog' in the title of this paper, resulting in a 'deficit model' addressing only weak students (Carroll and Ryan, 2005; Wingate, 2006). Five years of research (Sloan & Porter, 2009) and evidence from the literature (Wingate, 2006, 2007) identify the ineffectiveness of study skills as:

- a negative view of study skills sessions by the students
- lack of communication between study skills and subject specialists
- poor student attendance symptomatic of lack of engagement
- lack of transferability of study skills to other elements of the academic programme.

Waters and Waters (2001 p 377) suggest study skills are the surface techniques students need in order to study effectively, whereas study competence is an underlying capacity for study *‘consisting of attributes... such as self-confidence, self-awareness, the ability to think creatively and critically, independence of mind’*. Competence forms a foundation for skills and should be the focus of activities aiming to help students to study effectively. Such study competence is best developed within the context of the discipline (Hyland 2002), as Hussey and Smith (2010, p 159 point out:

At first the language of the new subject is strange and unfamiliar and the students may not be able to use terms with ease or accuracy. As they become initiated into the subject they begin to use the language with increasing confidence: they begin to appropriate the concepts and terms for themselves and may come to identify themselves as belonging within the community of those studying ‘their’ subject.

A new definition of ‘study skills’ is presented promoting study skills activities as *an in-session, skills support programme, incorporating language and study skills to support academic learning, development and competences*. Acknowledging Wingate (2006), and with respect to a negative perception of labelling ‘study skills’ as ‘language skills’, at Northumbria University the ‘English Language for In-session Students’, was rebranded Academic Skills (ASk). The ASk title, used throughout the paper when referring to study skills, moves away from the deficit connotations and embraces more effectively the study skills and study competence essential for academic development and learning Blythman et al (2003).

Identification and delivery of the CEM Model.

This paper is positioned within the discourse of the study skills debate by providing a generic definition of this key resource, capable of localised branding. It also presents a solution to the call within the literature of how ASk teaching material is developed to address the need for greater synergy between study skills, study competence and subject specialist content. The model presented demonstrates you can teach an old dog new tricks, illustrating how this new pedagogical approach can change and develop the existing traditional delivery patterns of ASk. Central to the model is identification of three key foci: *Contextualisation*: the context in which an ASk programme is taught to students; *Embedding*: positioning of the ASk tutor and subject within the subject specialist team and programme and *Mapping*: the timing and scheduling of the ASk content to student needs, all are covered extensively in Sloan and Porter, 2010. The resulting pedagogic framework, the CEM Model Figure 1, presents a simple but effective model, used to explain and communicate to the key stakeholders of staff, students and management the principles of an effective approach for the delivery of ASk.

(Insert Figure 1)

Evidence of application

At Newcastle Business School the ASk team comprises two members of staff, one based in the English Language Centre supporting undergraduate provision and one on sabbatical from the Centre supporting postgraduate provision. As a result of implementing the CEM Model ASk provision has been reviewed and more innovative teaching processes, a direct result of collaboration between subject and ASk specialists, have been introduced. Subject specialists now inform the ASk curriculum, presenting students with support for their ASk development at a time when they can use those skills in their formative and summative assessments. The ASk specialist has access to authentic texts which can be used to teach high level critical thinking skills. Subject specialists team-teach with the ASk specialist raising student's

awareness of differences in the UK educational culture. Formative assessment exercises are designed allowing students feedback from both the subject and ASk specialist.

Application of the CEM Model has facilitated an improved student learning experience addressing the:

- diverse needs of the international student learning community through improving the context in which the ASk programme is delivered;
- quality of student learning by linking the effectiveness of the delivery of ASk provision to the academic programmes;
- development of contextualised ASk facilitating students transferable written and oral skills, including the ability to critically analyse and solve problems, both of which are inextricably linked with language;
- timing of delivery, ensuring that students are equipped with study skills at the most appropriate times for their learning.

Initial evidence of the effective application has been established via student feedback, academic staff feedback and student attendance, (Sloan & Porter, 2009). Ongoing feedback still continues to validate the value of the ASk sessions

Ask provides effective support to the Masters programmes, being a centralised provision of key academic skills that are transferable programme wide, ensuring both consistency of message and avoidance of repetition. Programme Director

The critical discussion task is seen as very beneficial for all students; good at improving writing skills; it covers fundamental skills for Masters Students; British students had found it surprisingly helpful. MSc Business Management Programme Representative.

The CEM Model is implemented at Undergraduate and has been endorsed by the University Learning and Teaching Committee as an exemplar of good practice for the delivery of ASk across the University. The degree to which the ASk specialist and the skills programme is embedded varies in the Schools and allows them flexibility in meeting their specific needs to support their international students.

Introduction of the CEM Model within the School of Management and Languages, Heriot-Watt University.

A key element of this paper was to demonstrate the transferability of the CEM Model within the HE Community in order to evaluate its adoption and contribution within a different learning environment. The model was trialled at Heriot-Watt University, an institution with the highest proportion of international students of all the Scottish Universities. The following describes the provision of English language support classes delivered by three members of staff prior to the research, analysis of the impact of the model from the English language and subject specialists, the students and a review leading to changes in practice.

Heriot-Watt's School of Management and Languages (SML) provides in-session English for Academic Purposes (EAP) support classes taught as generic study skills and language classes for two hours each week in Semester 1, not linked to specific degrees. The CEM Model was introduced September 2009-2010 to evaluate the provision of in-session EAP within SML. Separate classes were offered for the six taught postgraduate degree programmes Translation and Interpreting (T&I), Strategic Project Management (SPM), Logistics and Supply Chain Management (L&SM), Accounting and/or Finance (A&F), Business Management (BM) and International Fashion Marketing (IFM). These programmes were useful for evaluating the model as the extent to which EAP classes were contextualised embedded and mapped within the parent degree varied considerably. Five key issues were identified in relation to establishing delivery of EAP in SML as a basis for acting as a trial for the research.

Provision of English language support classes prior to the research

The delivery of in-session support was minimal with EAP classes provided for three of the six pathways: T&I, BM and SPM, BM. Provision was general and not related specifically to students needs, due to the inexperience of the class EAP tutor. The EAP tutor for T&I and

SPM, with more EAP experience related classes more to students' needs, identified through discussions with Course Directors, auditing lecture content and, in the case of SPM, running EAP classes in tandem with the Research Skills module. In 2009, all six pathways were provided with EAP classes.

Communication. The in-sessional co-ordinator was not invited to speak at the induction, publicity was prepared for the welcome packs and subject lecturers were asked to mention the language support classes. Course Directors for all six pathways were informed by email of the availability of language and study support and specific times were suggested for these classes, mapping to the timetable of lectures for each degree.

Timetabling. Timetables for all the degrees were published on the postgraduate student portal. Lectures were blocked on certain days, leaving other days completely free to establish suitable times for EAP delivery and once the timetable for EAP classes was established a link to it was put on the postgraduate portal.

EAP content. The syllabus was designed by the in-sessional co-ordinator, based on talking to lecturers about students' needs. The sessions covered group writing, followed by conventions of academic essays, referencing; defining concepts and developing technical vocabulary; introduction to research in the social sciences; the structure of research papers and research abstracts; reading papers critically to evaluate research in terms of its stated aims and methodology; writing literature reviews; linking theory to practice and analysing exam questions.

Analysis of the impact of the CEM Model from the English language tutor, subject specialists and the students at Heriot-Watt

This section presents findings from three perspectives, the EAP in-session co-ordinator and subject specialists who are Course Directors, using one to one interviews; concluding with comments collected using focus groups from the students who attended the EAP classes. Table 1 shows the success of the programme which has been measured in terms of student half-life, i.e. how many weeks it took for attendance to drop to half its original level.

(Insert Table 1.)

Perspective of the EAP Tutor

Contextualisation. The content of the classes reflected the kinds of language texts and tasks students meet on their degrees. In order to produce materials which supported students meetings with staff identified what students cannot do but need to do, in terms of communication, research and critical thinking skills,. Some of the provision was generic, most of the materials were based on published research papers, actual coursework tasks and past exam papers.

Embedding. This was weak, due to the fact that this was the first year that these classes have been run in a systematic way and the lecturers were not yet aware of them as a resource supporting programme learning objectives. This was perpetuated by the limited two-way interaction between the in-session co-ordinator and the Course Directors, resulting in a situation where those lecturers who supported their students continued to do so without checking any conflict with planned activities in the EAP classes. In line with the early findings of the research (Sloan & Porter, 2009) the lecturers did not view in-session classes as integral to their degree programmes. When prompted they encouraged students to attend but could not describe what was covered. An attempt was made to contact lecturers by email to report on the support classes and to establish a dialogue about the content of the classes.

Mapping. This was also not particularly effective. It was very difficult to get any information about coursework from lecturers, except in the case of the T&I and L&SM degrees, so most information about coursework came from students and not always in time to

plan a response. Students stopped attending classes once they realized that they did not address their specific needs in a timely way

Perspective of the subject specialists

Contextualisation. The context in which the academic skills are presented and communicated to students. In line with the EAP tutor's comments the T&I programme, where the tutor has had extensive input with both staff and programme development, showed that contextualisation had been established and proved successful.

...I think the fact that the main tutor ...for our degree programmes anyway, is actually involved in various integral aspects of our degree programme, so for example assisting in designing assessment criteria or in assessment type, supervising dissertations, teaching on our technical writing - localisation and technical writing module, dealing with the technical writing side of that, - involved in our translation practice module which is absolutely core to everything that we do here as well – it means that she – without our having to sit down and have meetings and so on a regular basis, it means that she actually understands what it is we're about, what our learning outcomes are, what our assessment criteria and methods are...Course Director

In some programmes there has been more success than others, with the main difficulty identified as getting module leaders on board;

Yeah, I think she (the EAP tutor) tries, she certainly tries, because she asks us – she always asks – she sends a lot of information out asking for what's being done. I don't think she gets the feedback that she would like! Course Director

Embedding and Mapping. Relating to the positioning of EAP within the overall academic programme, programme team, and understanding the student's needs in relation to language learning and timeliness of EAP delivery. Subject specialists commented on the efforts made by the EAP tutor to integrate the EAP Programme and themselves within the degree programmes and the subject teams. In the case of the T&I programme embedding has been emphasised from week one of the programme by the academic team

...I also think that she advertised quite heavily at the beginning of semester so she advertised through course directors across the School and so on and that then was part of – was one of the things that I said to the group in the first hour that I met with them to say 'here's your timetable, here are the kind of elective options that are available to you, here's my advice about selecting an elective' and so on and so forth, that that was part of

the kind of topic area that I wanted to cover and that was English support and to say that it was available to everyone and that I was recommending strongly that students go along...

However, in the remaining programmes this integration has not always occurred as shown by the following comment:

... unless we can embed it in the teaching, the students don't integrate it and they see it as two different activities... Course Director

To summarise, recognition from the subject specialists is necessary if the EAP Programme is to be successful. The degree to which subject specialists promoted the EAP Programme was vague and sometimes conflicted with other activities. The EAP tutor cannot map the EAP Programme to meet student needs unless they are aware of what subject specialists are teaching. However some advances have been made as can be seen from the following comment:

Well it's certainly happened much better than it ever has before, that's for sure. I think prior to [EAP tutor] picking this thing up we had only a vague awareness of the programme, the English language programme, and we used to direct students off in that direction and we never really understood who went, who didn't go, whether they got anything from it. Course Director

Perspective of the Students

Embedding, the students had mixed views about whether the EAP Programme was an integral part of their degree programme. They believed it was not perceived by students as part of their programme and blamed this on the lack of any reference to the programme by subject specialists. One student expressed:

It's not a support class.....it's another key tool that must be given to students to grasp when they are studying their research.

More positively students recognised the transferability of the skills to other modules:

Yes, it gave us ideas we can use throughout our course.

For me it was helpful. I don't think that I would be – I would have been able to do this work, I have done until now without this support.

Review of changes to practice at Heriot-Watt University

Rebranding the EAP programme

The branding of the EAP Programme should change to reflect its focus on academic skills and not language and as a result of the research EAP has now been rebranded Enhancing Scholarship

So we have a very high proportion of international students, so the issue for us is not just about language, it's about understanding what our culture of learning is, you know, it's about study skills as well so it gets all very messy – it gets all sort of mixed.

Promotion of the EAP Programme by subject specialists

Promotion of the programme was essential if students were to engage.

.... I think that I would have more confidence that next year, in the department, we could do a better job of promoting it with a first run-through the thing and actually seeing what's happening and particularly I really do like this idea of the course materials are used, that the students are seeing something that's directly relevant to what they're doing. Course Director

A positive start but further discussions need to take place with all stakeholders in respect to the timing of the promotion, the media used for promotion, the content of verbal and written communication, and the role of the Course Director in establishing both implicitly and explicitly the importance of the activity.

Management support in adopting the model

The CEM Model would not be adopted very easily without the support of senior management. There was a need to integrate the CEM Model as part of academic team management through links to learning and teaching processes (Sloan & Porter, 2010). As a Course Director at Heriot-Watt identified:

I mean we're no doubt at fault – [EAP tutor] doesn't get the support, I know she doesn't get the support, but the other reason she doesn't get support is that she's not in our department as well because we're the School of Management.

The need to move away from using the Deficit Model of international students

As the following quote from Course Directors identified, students did not like the perception that they were lacking language skills if they attended the EAP Programme

I would think that's certainly the case and I found in the past that students didn't really want to go there and discuss these sessions. Now, because the sessions actually seem directly relevant to what they're doing, they're much happier to talk about it, I think that's certainly the case.

Summary of the impact of the implementation of the CEM Model at Heriot-Watt

Attendance figures in Table 1, show the EAP Programme was most successful for the T&I class. Comparing this class with the other five some critical success factors can be established.

Contextualisation. Students are busy and pressurised on their taught masters programmes. The EAP tutor therefore has to contextualise the programme and its content for the students so they see the tangible benefits directly related to success on their subject modules. Subject Tutors and Course Directors are critical to achieving this. The success of the T&I programme should be built on as exemplar for other programmes to illustrate the benefits of collaboration.

Not all EAP tutors feel confident enough about the syllabus and materials to be able to contextualise them in EAP classes. Students therefore stop attending as soon as they had assignment deadlines to meet. Greater support from the Subject Tutors will lead to more informed EAP programme materials – availability of academic material from the Course Directors also provides opportunities for EAP staff development through familiarity with the content.

Embedding. Good relations and communication with the Subject Tutors are important but not sufficient to establish the status of the EAP programme within each degree programme. Although the EAP support classes might be recognised as important at School level, i.e.

through top-slice funding, they need to be embedded at programme level for students and lecturers to take them seriously.

Mapping. The programme, module syllabuses and assessments need to be available in advance with the possibility of discussing these with each Course Director or Subject Tutor. This enables the in-sessional co-ordinator to understand the needs of the students on each degree and map the EAP provision to these needs.

The CEM Model's ongoing development and refinement.

The research also sought to gain an insight into how the model could be refined and developed. The CEM Model was developed to contribute to learning and teaching policy at a macro level through the strategic framework (Sloan & Porter, 2010). From the collaborative research, whilst attempting to explain and rationalise the approach of the model to Heriot-Watt colleagues, it became clear the CEM Model could be enhanced to use as an effective communications tool. To clarify the communication process further a 10 point check list, Table 2, was developed as a schematic to assist users of the model in considering key stakeholders and how to integrate the ASk module and tutor into the overall delivery process.

Insert Table 2

A key area of development has been recognition of the adaptability of the 'Embedding' element of the model. Within Newcastle Business School ASk is a non-credit bearing module providing an added value element of the students' learning portfolio. From the research the model has been developed further to represent the hierarchy of embedding, as demonstrated by other Schools within Northumbria and at Heriot-Watt, where embedding has integrated Scholarship within a credit bearing module through joint delivery.

Table 3 represents the evolution of the embedding aspect of the CEM Model. At Level 0, no embedding has taken place. Level 1 shows embedding taking place with the ASk

tutor working in parallel with the subject tutor as in Newcastle Business School. At Level 2 embedding is achieved by integrating the ASk module into a degree module, for example, Research Methods, where the series of seminars is shared between the Research Methods specialist and the ASk tutor. In Level 3, Research Methods and ASk are delivered through team teaching, where the subject specialist and the ASk tutor, work together with the students in the same seminars. Level 4, optional, recognises that if required, the ASk module can be developed to represent a credit bearing module in its own right on a degree programme.

Insert Table 3

Conclusion

This research has addressed a theme central to universities and the HE community's policy towards internationalisation by identifying processes to support further development in the teaching and mapping of English language and study skills for international students. Responding to calls within the literature, the paper discusses the role and perception of study skills. The generic definition of study skills as *an in-sessional, skills support programme, incorporating language and study skills to support academic learning, development and competences* has been identified. Acknowledging different practices within the sector, as the research has shown, the labelling of study skills for students is critical. This paper therefore illustrates that the proposed definition is transferable and can be mapped to different 'branding' as illustrated by ASk in Northumbria and Scholarship at Heriot-Watt.

The focus of this paper, is commenting on change to established practise, reflecting the recent drift in further education of adopting a more specific subject-based approach to the teaching of English for academic purposes. Findings show this old dog can be taught new tricks through recognition of the importance of mapping English language provision to the subject's students study, as shown through application of the CEM Model. This means understanding the language used in specific academic contexts and organising the students

English language provision around subject specific, purposeful activities. As a solution, the paper has presented collaborative research between Northumbria and Heriot-Watt University on the transferability and applicability of an existing pedagogical framework based on the areas of contextualisation, embedding and mapping, represented in the CEM Model. This pedagogic framework, designed to ensure effective collaboration between the key stakeholders of academic staff, academic skills staff and the student, presents a model and examples of its application to enhance the holistic design and delivery of academic skills at both a micro and macro level through a collaborative partnership.

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Table 1. Heriot-Watt, School of Management and Languages student attendance

Degree	Attendance first class	Time to reduce to half	Attendance final class	Comments
Translating and Interpreting	24	N/A	21	Attendance high throughout the semester.
Logistics	30	Week 5 15 students	8	Reduction coincided with submission deadlines
Strategic Project Management	42	Week 4 16 students	5	Reduction coincided with submission deadlines
Business Management	17	Week 3 2 students	0	Attendance low after week 2
Accountancy	12	Week 2 7 students	1	Only one regular attender
Fashion Marketing	7			Attendance erratic from the beginning.

Table 2 Introducing the CEM Model: Implementation Plan

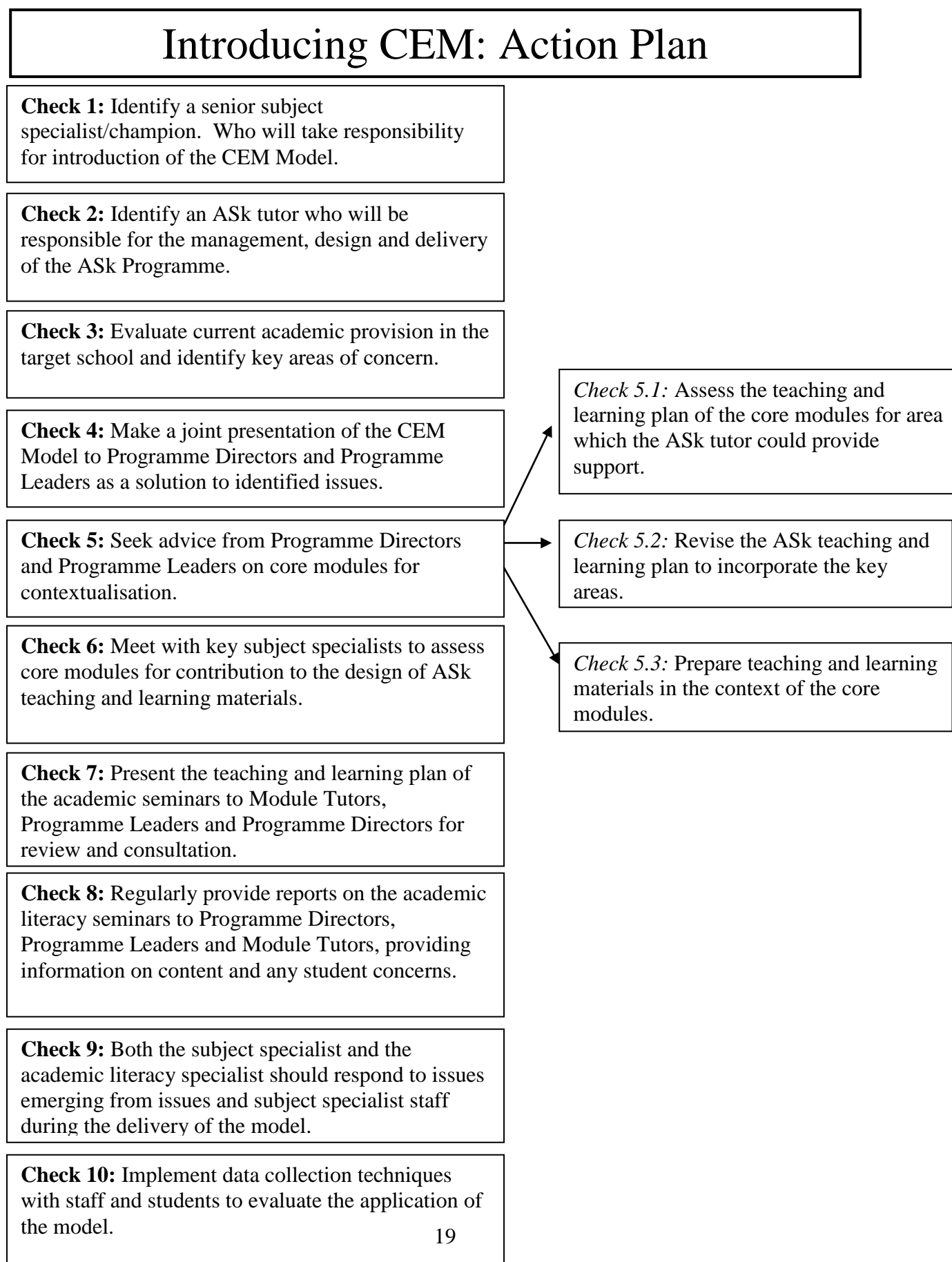


Table 3. Hierarchy of embedding within the CEM Model.

Recognition of ASk	Level	Extent of embedding of ASk teaching	Explanation
	0	No embedding	The ASk Programme is delivered as an optional extra to the degree programme. The ASk tutor is not promoted as part of the degree team but is recognised as a “visiting specialist” from the support school
	1	Embedded via working in parallel with selected degree modules	The ASk Programme is promoted as part of the student’s degree programme; the ASk tutor is promoted as a member of the degree team and the module content reflects the desired outcomes of the selected degree modules
	2	Embedded through integration into a degree module teaching and learning plan	The ASk teaching is subsumed in to a degree module e.g. Research Methods; the ASk tutor teaches ASk as part of the series of seminars in that module.
	3	Both tutors sharing delivery of the degree module	The ASk tutor “team-teaches” with the subject specialist in the degree module e.g. Research Module. Each seminar contains Research Methods “content” and “ASk” content.
	4 (optional)	Embedded as a credit bearing module in the degree programme	The ASk tutor teaches the programme; it is summatively assessed and gains credits.

Figure 1. The CEM Model .

